



Maricopa County

Department of Public Health

December 11, 2009

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Dear Parent:

For those of you who already stepped up and vaccinated your child against the Novel H1N1 flu, your community thanks you and I thank you. For those of you who missed your appointments or who have children under 10 who need a second dose, you are in luck.

We are now opening H1N1 public vaccine clinics for those in high risk groups across Maricopa County. As you may remember, children are part of these risk groups (also, pregnant women, people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age, health care and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months - 24 years of age, and people from ages 25-64 years with chronic health disorders.)

This is a good opportunity to get your children their first or second doses of vaccine. There has been some confusion as to why children under 10 years of age need two doses of vaccine. The first flu vaccine dose "primes" the immune system, so the second dose can provide full immune protection. Younger children receive little protection from a single dose of flu vaccine so two doses are necessary.

The level of H1N1 flu has been declining recently. *But don't let that fool you!* History tells us to expect a 3rd wave of the epidemic, perhaps during our regular flu season beginning next month, perhaps later in the spring.

Children are always the primary spreaders of the flu, and with this H1N1 flu, they have suffered far more serious illness than we usually see from the regular, seasonal flu. So when the 3rd wave happens, we expect to again see it start in schools and seriously affect many children. This is why we have worked so hard to make sure your children have access to the vaccine. Now we need your help in finishing the job.

The more kids we get vaccinated before the 3rd wave, the better chance we have at making it much smaller. Again, our mass immunizers may ask for an administration fee for the H1N1 vaccine, but **no one will be turned away for lack of insurance or lack of payment.**

Please visit www.StopTheSpreadAZ.org for a complete list of sites, or call our bilingual hotline at 1-877-764-2670 to find a site near you. And don't forget your regular, seasonal flu shots while you're at it. Our usual flu season is right around the corner.

Thank you, and stay healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob England".

Bob England, MD, MPH

Director

Maricopa County Department of Public Health